

*Briefing
29 July*

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Newsnight

STATION WTOP-TV

DATE July 29, 1966 6:00 PM CITY Washington, DC

HELMS AND FULBRIGHT INTERVIEWED

SAM DONALDSON: "The new Director of the Central Intelligence Agency appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at his own request, and apologized for endorsing a newspaper slap at the Committee Chairman, Senator J. William Fulbright.

"The St. Louis Globe Democrat had called Fulbright 'crafty' and said he had been properly rebuked by the Senate in his fight to gain seats in the CIA watchdog committee for Foreign Relations Committee members.

"Two days ago, the same newspaper printed a letter from CIA Chief Richard Helms, in which he declared he wanted to let the editors know of his pleasure in reading the editorial.

"Well, Helms' appearance on Capitol Hill followed yesterday's explosion on the floor of the Senate by any number of members indignantly protesting a CIA endorsement of the attack on Fulbright. Even Senators who opposed the Arkansas Democrat, rose to his defense. And Helms, before the Committee, then in a brief statement to reporters, apologized."

HELMS: "I was just simply saying that it was a mistake to sign this letter. I realize it was a mistake, which I regret. And I've apologized."

REPORTER: "Did you draft this letter, sir?"

DONALDSON: "Senator Wayne Morse, a Committee member, demanded that Helms resign in a statement before the committee meeting, but the objective of the attack, Chairman Fulbright, was willing to forgive."

FULBRIGHT: "(fading in)...by an assistant and was submitted to him along with a number of other personal letters, as distinguished from, you know, business letters -- you see, he's been recently appointed, and he simply signed it, as he said,

-2-

without focusing upon the full significance of it."

REPORTER: "Well, now that he has focused, did he apologize to you?"

FULBRIGHT: "He did. Well, he called yesterday, really, and apologized voluntarily. I didn't ask him for an apology, and he did again this morning. And, of course, the whole significance of this is not the editorial, which is a rather common occurrence in all the newspapers critical of public officials, and certainly the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But, the -- the feeling of uncertainty about this type of thing happening in the CIA, I think it is -- the circumstances, as described by Mr. Helms will certainly go a very long way to, well, to excuse a mistake. I mean, anybody can make a mistake, and I'm sure he's going to be very careful not to make another one of a similar nature."

REPORTER: "Senator Morse called for his resignation. Do you favor any more in that direction?"

FULBRIGHT: "I don't think I'd think it that drastic. And I believe he will be very careful about these matters in the future."

DONALDSON: "Many Committee members said they were impressed with Helms' candid apology and discussion before the Committee, and they thought some good may have come from the experience. But it was left to the Senate Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, to have the final word on the affair, 'If Senators had to resign every time they made a mistake,' said Mansfield, 'the Senate wouldn't have a single member.'"